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Next week in

THE SPINECHILLER
Collection

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OUR HAUNTED WORLD
The Jungles of South America
Lost City

STRANGE BUT TRUE
Amelia Earhart

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AIR WAVES



aron's dad walked purposefully to the television set
and turned it off. "Is your homework done?" he
asked in an irritated tone.

"Almost," Aaron answered, hedging around the
truth, which was that he hadn't even started it yet.

"I'll finish it right after this programme."

"You'll finish it now," his dad demanded. "I'm not going to
stand by and watch you turn into a couch potato."

Oh no, Aaron thought. Here it comes again.

"I don't see why you want to spend all your time sitting in
front of a television, anyway. Why don't you get outside more?
Why don't you spend more time with your friends?"

"All my friends watch TV too, Dad," Aaron offered.

His father shook his head and sighed. "You know, when I was
a boy..." he began.

Aaron pushed his glasses back up on to the bridge of his nose
and flopped against the couch cushions. He was trapped. There
was nothing he could do now but listen.



"Television was something special that I got to watch occasionally," his dad went on. "I spent time with my friends playing football or just mucking around."

"I don't like football!" Aaron said unco-operatively. "Besides, I don't see what the big deal is," he added, knowing that what he was about to say would annoy his father. "Mum never minded when I watched TV. And you never used to complain about it when she was here."

Aaron knew he was standing on firm ground with this statement. Before his parents' divorce, his dad hadn't paid much attention to him. Now, he was always on his case about something or another.

"Well, things are different now," his father replied softly.

"Look," he finally said. "I don't want to fight with you about this all the time. Maybe we can work out a compromise. But for now I want you to finish your homework."

"But Dad," Aaron protested. "It's Friday. I can finish it over the weekend."

There's a great, new sci-fi

programme starting tonight called *Gamma Brigade*...everybody's going to watch it."

"Upstairs," his father said, pointing towards Aaron's room.



When Aaron got on the school bus the next Monday morning, everyone was talking about *Gamma Brigade*.

"What did you think of that gamma ray retro-blaster the captain had?" Aaron's friend Eddie asked, sliding into his seat.

"I didn't see it," Aaron answered glumly. Eddie gaped at him in surprise. "What do you mean? How could you miss it?"

Aaron scowled. "Well, my dad wouldn't let me watch TV," he explained.

Eddie shrugged. "My mum gets like that about TV sometimes. She says that if I watch too much it'll hurt my eyes. But I suppose that wouldn't be a problem for you." He grinned and tapped one of the unusually thick lenses of Aaron's special prescription glasses that he wore to correct his short-sightedness. "You're already blind as a bat."

Aaron smiled back mischievously. "Yeah, I may need glasses, but at least my feet touch the floor when I sit down, Shortie." He and Eddie always poked fun at each other, but they both knew that it was only friendly kidding.

Once he got to school, it was clear to Aaron that he was probably the only kid who had missed the first episode of *Gamma Brigade*.

"So, who thinks the captain is cute?" Becky asked as she joined Aaron and

some other kids in the canteen at lunchtime.

"I think the dispatcher is more your type Becky," Anne said smugly. Everyone laughed except Aaron.

"What's so funny?" he asked.

"The dispatcher is a really disgustingly ugly alien who hosts the show," Eddie explained. "He's supposed to be able to keep in contact with the characters through their special communicator badges. And he wants everyone who watches the programme to get them too. I've already sent away for mine."

"I have too," Becky said, turning to Aaron. "You can get them free if you write to the television studios."

Aaron nodded, wondering if he'd ever get to see the programme himself.



After dinner the following Friday night, Aaron sat expectantly in front of the TV. *Gamma Brigade* would be starting in a few minutes, and he and his dad had worked out a deal in which he could watch an hour of TV each night, as long as his homework was finished beforehand. Leaning back, he prepared to become completely lost in what his friends had claimed was the best sci-fi programme ever. But as the minutes passed, his disappointment grew.

"What is everybody making such a big deal about?" he muttered when the episode was nearly half over. True, the dispatcher was a pretty cool alien. He looked like a huge, lime-green lizard in a

military uniform. But the show itself was rubbish. Nevertheless, Aaron followed the instructions given after the credits to obtain his own communicator badge. He printed his name, age, address, and the number of people in his family on a postcard, then posted it to the TV studios.

On the bus the following Monday, Aaron related his disappointment about *Gamma Brigade* to Eddie. "The sets were really naff!" he said critically. "And even I could have written a better story."

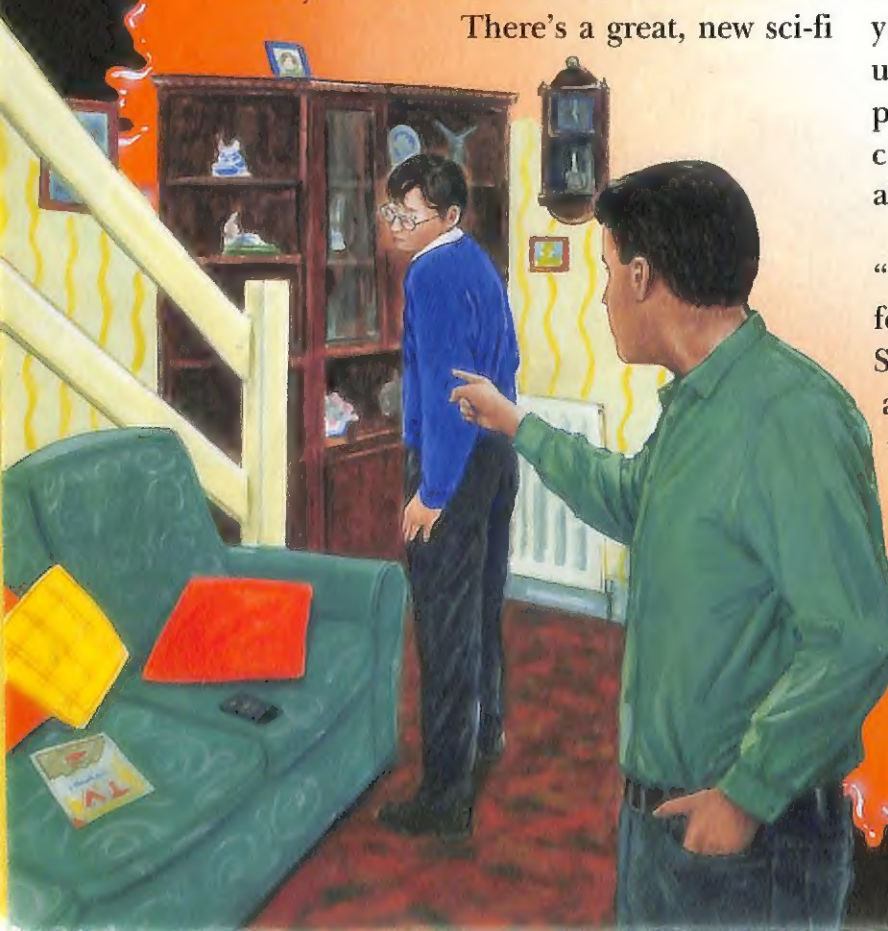
"I doubt that," Eddie responded with obvious displeasure. He nonchalantly ran one finger over the communicator badge that he now wore on his shirt at all times. "You're crazy! The programme is great."

"What's bothering you?" Aaron asked. "It's only a stupid television show. I just



don't think it measures up."

"Measures up? Was that supposed to be some kind of crack about my height?" Eddie demanded angrily.



Aaron couldn't believe that his friend was so upset. "No, I wasn't trying to make a joke. I..."

But Eddie cut him off. "Look, I'm sick of your dumb jokes. And I'm sick of you!" With that, he slid out of his seat and moved to the front of the bus.

At school Eddie soon let the other kids know what Aaron had said about *Gamma Brigade*. By lunch-time he was an outcast – everyone seemed to be taking the programme so seriously. Then, during PE class, he was stunned to see that even the PE teacher, Mr Mortimer, was wearing a badge on his sweatshirt.



By the time Aaron got home he was in a terrible mood. His dad was in the lounge, but Aaron went straight to his room and didn't come out until dinner-time. When he did come downstairs, he saw that his dad was

still in the lounge, sitting on the sofa.

"Dad?" he murmured. His father said nothing. The room was lit only by the spectral glow of the TV screen. In the bluish light Aaron could see his father was mesmerised by what he was watching.

"Dad?" Aaron tried again. He glanced at the screen and saw the alien face of the dispatcher. "Dad, what are you doing?" Aaron asked, flicking on the overhead light. "W-what are you watching."

His father turned to him and smiled. "I'm watching that programme all you kids keep talking about," he said. "I've been a little hard on you lately, so I thought it might be nice if I checked it out... sort of met you halfway."

Aaron looked at the screen. "But it's not supposed to be on tonight."

His father laughed. "Well, I heard from Alan Johnson, who works at the studios, that the programme's such a big hit they've decided to put it on screen five days a week. And look here," he declared, holding out a small package. "This arrived in the post for you. Sorry, I opened it."



Aaron threw a puzzled glance at his father and took the already opened box. Inside was a communicator badge in a protective plastic bag. "But... how did it get here so fast? I only sent for it on..."

"That doesn't matter," his dad interrupted. "Let me help you put it on." He grabbed the package and fumbled with the small plastic bag. Aaron noticed that a similar badge was also pinned to his father's shirt.

"Wait a minute!" Aaron said with a growing sense of dread. "Where did you get that?" He pointed to the badge pinned over his father's left shirt pocket.

"It was in the box when I opened it. The studio bosses must have sent one for every member of the family," his father said, reaching towards him. "Let's put yours on. Come on now. Let me help you with this."

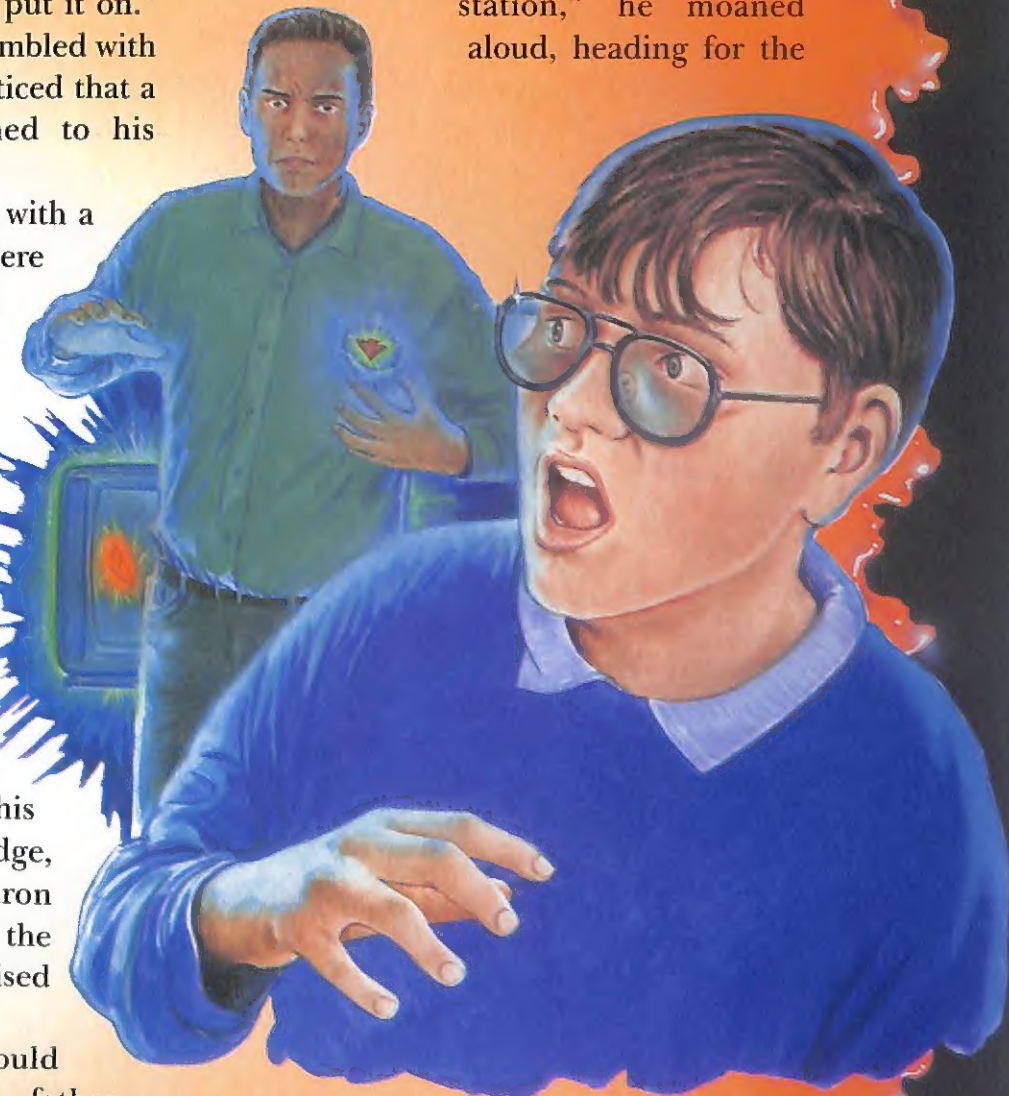
"No!" Aaron cried out. Trying to push his dad away, his watch caught on his father's badge, ripping open his shirt. Aaron gasped in horror. The image of the badge was emblazoned in a raised pattern on his dad's bare chest!

Stumbling back, Aaron could hardly believe his eyes. His father lunged at him again with the badge in his hand, but Aaron managed to twist away and charge to the front door. He didn't understand exactly what was going on, but he knew for certain that he didn't want one of those badges on him.

"There's nowhere for you to run!" his father screamed, as Aaron raced into the night. "They'll find you!"

Aaron ran and ran until he felt that his lungs would burst. Finally he had to stop. Gulping in the cool evening air, he realised that he was in the centre of town, but it was completely deserted.

"I've got to get to the police station," he moaned aloud, heading for the



two-storey brick building at the end of the street. As he passed McKelvey's Electronics he was confronted by dozens of TV sets of every size in the huge display window. The dispatcher's hideous lizard face was on every screen.

"Give yourself up!" the image demanded, its eyes boring into Aaron's. "We will find you!"

As Aaron reached the police station, he saw an officer stepping out through the door. In terror he realised that the man had a communicator badge displayed prominently on his uniform. Aaron ducked back into the shadows.

"What am I going to do?" he moaned. He had never felt so alone in his life.

When the first glimmer of dawn showed on the horizon, Aaron made up his mind. 'The television studios,' he thought. 'That's where everything started. Maybe... if I could just shut the whole thing down.'

Aaron remembered the address where he had sent his order for the communicator badge. It was only a few streets away, and keeping to the shadows, he made his way towards it.



There was no one around when he got there. He easily found an unlocked window and managed to work his way inside, dropping into a huge, dark room.

'This must be the sound stage,' he thought as he moved across the empty area. Then all at once a single powerful spotlight clicked on, creating a pool of white light only a few steps away from where he stood. Aaron shielded his eyes. At the same time he felt a slight vibration that seemed to emanate from the floor and walls. A distorted voice spoke from somewhere in the surrounding gloom.

"Join us," it whispered.

As Aaron watched, a figure stepped into the pool of light. He recognised the bizarre, alien features of the *Gamma*

Brigade dispatcher. "It isn't going to be that bad," the creature said soothingly. "Though it would have been so much easier if you had surrendered your will... like the others." The dispatcher moved closer and leaned towards Aaron as if to get a closer look. "This thick glass you wear over your eyes must have somehow interfered with our broadcast."

Aaron reached up to touch his special lenses, still too dumbfounded to speak.

"Well," the being said with an air of satisfaction. "It doesn't matter now. Our goal has been achieved."

"What goal?" Aaron stammered, finding his voice.

"We came here to find suitable labourers to rebuild our planet. You Earthlings are easily influenced and will work quite well for us."

From somewhere deep inside, Aaron dredged up the courage to resist. "No!" he screamed. "I will never join you! I'll find others, and we'll stop you!"

"You're welcome to try," the creature answered with a sound that seemed somewhat like a laugh. "But you will fail."

With that, the lights rose. Aaron saw that he was in a huge, circular area. Dozens of small viewing screens flickered on above him, showing people from all over town sitting placidly in small cells. His dad was among them. A single large screen showed planet Earth falling rapidly away behind them.

"I'm on your ship," Aaron said in quiet shock. "Aren't I?"

"Well done," the alien answered, opening its clawed hand. In its palm rested a communicator badge. "Put it on," the alien commanded. "It'll be easier that way."

Aaron watched as his beloved planet grew smaller and smaller on the screen. He turned and reached for the badge, then slowly pinned it over his heart.

THE END



OUR HAUNTED WORLD



Welcome to the paradise islands of the Caribbean where all is not quite as it seems...

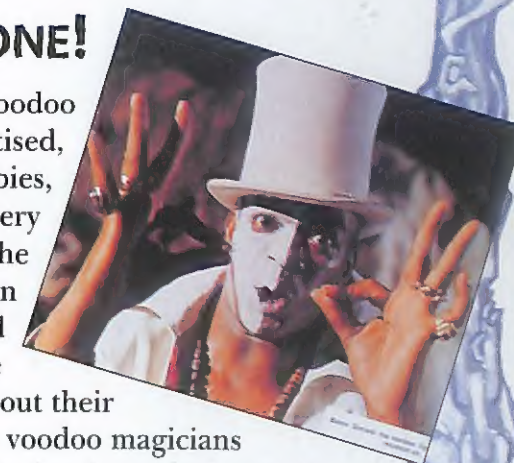
FOREST FREAKS!

On the island of Trinidad, locals believe in all sorts of nasty spirits. Mama Dlo – mother of the water – is the half-woman, half anaconda spirit who lurks in pools and rivers. In this drawing, you can see how she suffocates her victim with her enormous tail. Trinidadians believe that a spirit called Papa Bois is the guardian of the forest, where he warns animals of a hunter's presence. He sometimes takes on the form of a deer to lure greedy hunters deep into the forest. There, he'll turn into an old man and give the hunter a harsh warning. He might even sentence the hunter to be married to the terrifying Mama Dlo!



ZOMBIE ZONE!

In Haiti, where voodoo magic is still practised, people's fear of zombies, or the 'undead', is very real. Belief that the witch-doctors can resurrect dead bodies and make the



zombies carry out their wishes gives the voodoo magicians great power over the local people. Research has shown that zombies-to-be are given a powerful cocktail of poisons that puts them into a death-like coma. When the people have been pronounced dead, they are buried – but then secretly dug up a day or two later and given a reviving potion of drugs. This process causes brain damage and confusion to the zombie, who is fit for nothing other than to become the witch-doctor's slave.

Horror movies have brought the terror of zombies to a wider audience than ever before. And now it seems that the words 'zombie' and 'zombified' have passed into everyday language.

Even the coolest spy of them all, James Bond, has had a brush with an evil voodoo witch-doctor in the film *Live and Let Die* (above).

MONSTER BEETLE

The Hercules beetle (below), which is found all over the Caribbean, is one of the biggest and scariest beetles in the world. It can grow to an awesome 16cm. Never step on a Hercules beetle. When it engages in battle, it uses its giant horns to flip the enemy over and render it completely helpless. No wonder it's named after the Greek hero Hercules, who was admired for his courage and strength.



THE SLAVES' REVENGE

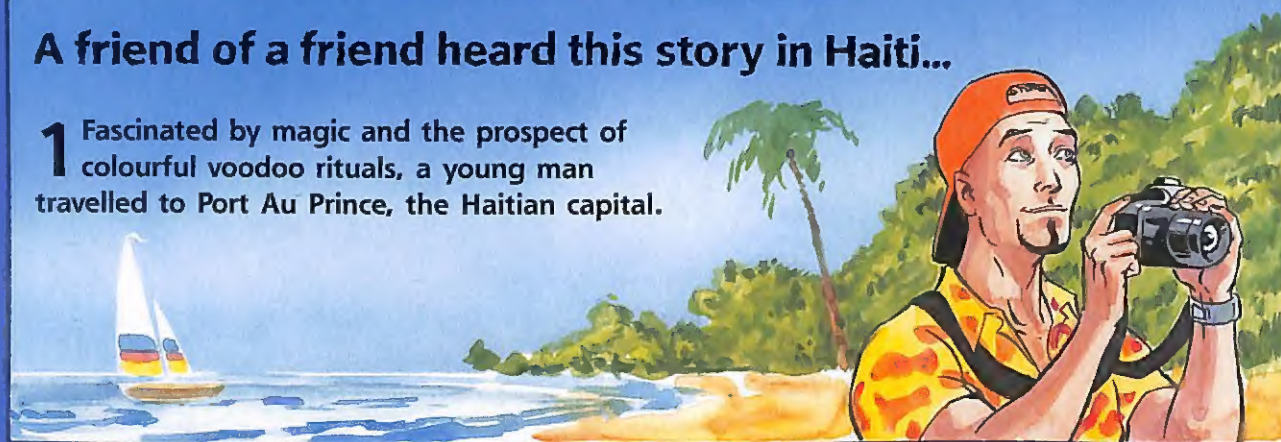
John Palmer was a wealthy 72-year-old widower who owned a sugar plantation in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in the 1750s. He married Anne, a 28-year-old Tahitian girl with an evil past. Her previous three husbands had all died in suspicious circumstances, each death adding to her fortune and social status. Anne mistreated the plantation slaves and arranged for their 'disappearance' whenever the mood took her. One night, the slaves took their revenge and murdered Anne in her bed. Unburied, her bones were thrown under a shady tree on the estate in the hope that her evil spirit would find no rest.

Maybe the slaves' dreams came true because the terrorised screams of Anne's ghost can still be heard echoing round the decaying rooms of the abandoned Rose Hall.

TORCHLIGHT TALE

A friend of a friend heard this story in Haiti...

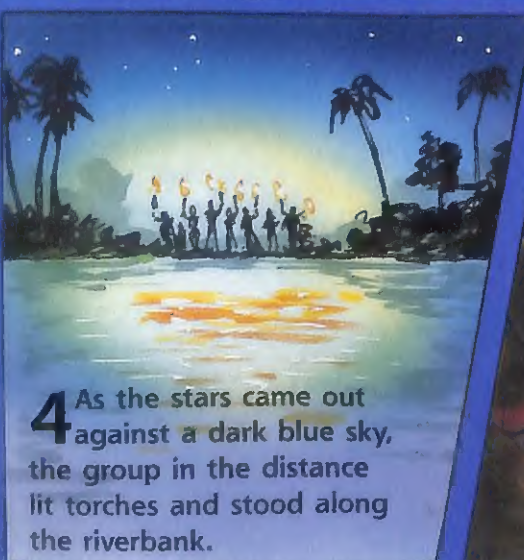
1 Fascinated by magic and the prospect of colourful voodoo rituals, a young man travelled to Port Au Prince, the Haitian capital.



2 However, everyone he asked about voodoo just looked blankly at him.

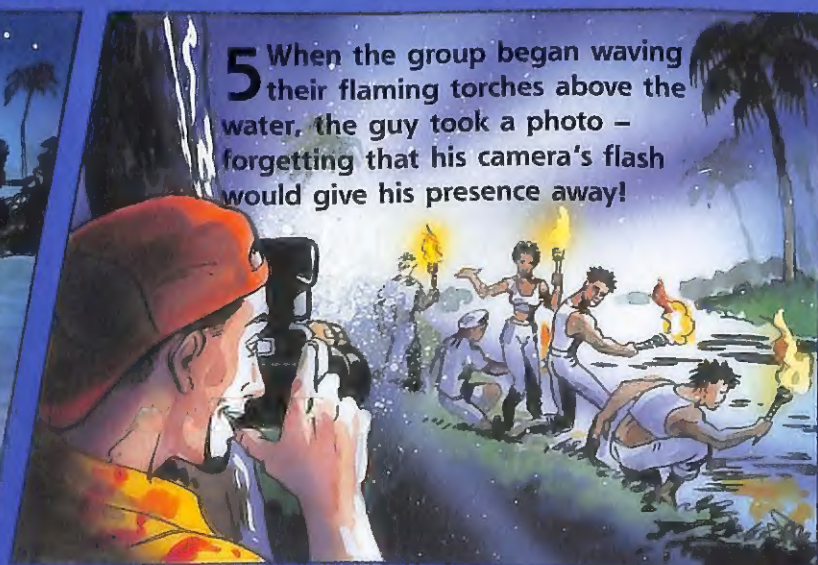


3 That evening, he spotted a large group of people carrying unlit torches. When they headed into the forest he decided to follow them.



4 As the stars came out against a dark blue sky, the group in the distance lit torches and stood along the riverbank.

5 When the group began waving their flaming torches above the water, the guy took a photo – forgetting that his camera's flash would give his presence away!



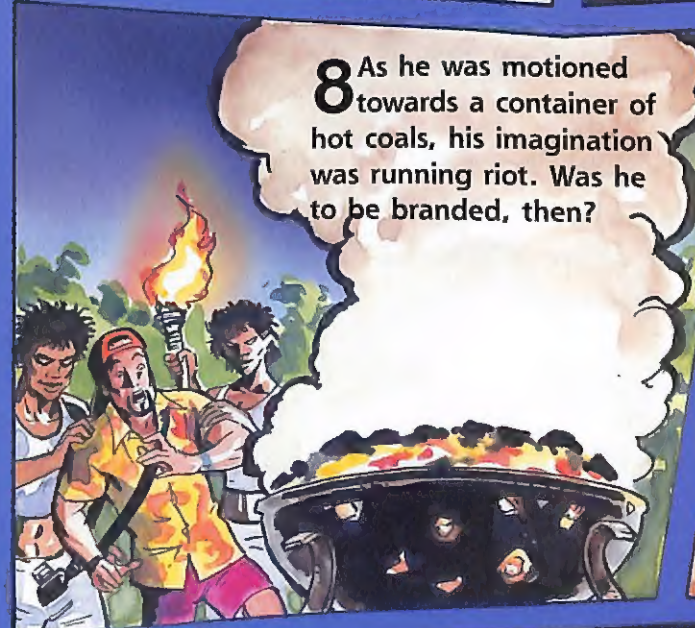
6 Seconds later, he was grabbed by the elbows by several wild-eyed, grinning people.



7 Terrified that he was about to be subjected to some dire voodoo ritual reserved for spies, the guy was marched towards the rest of the group.



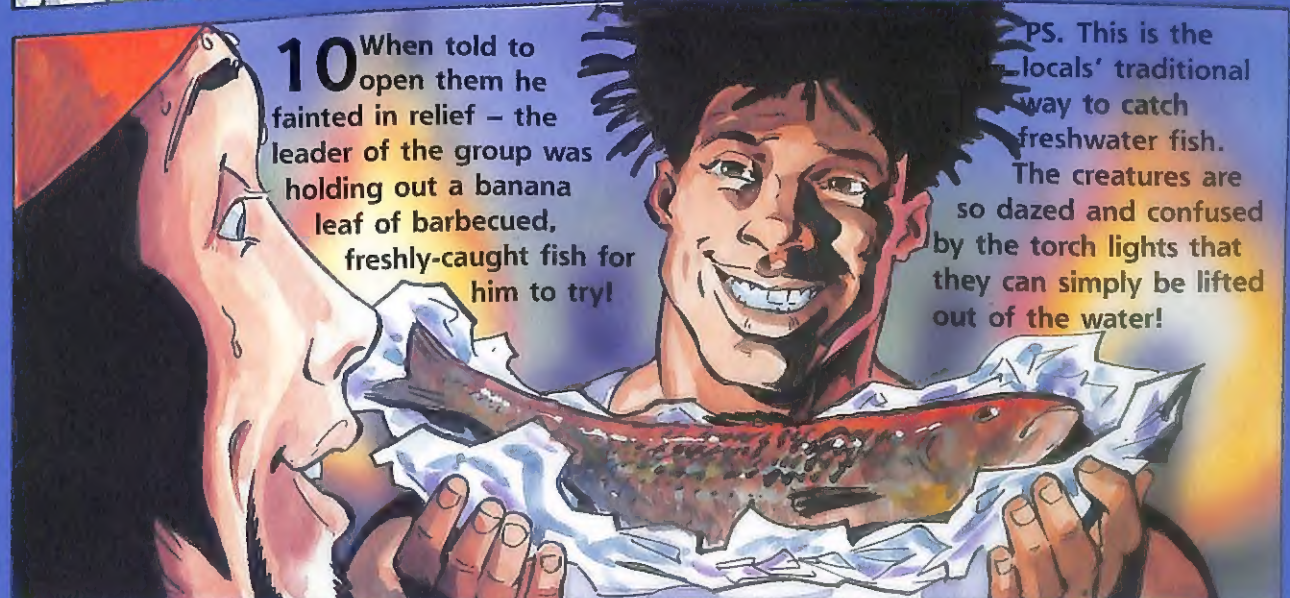
8 As he was motioned towards a container of hot coals, his imagination was running riot. Was he to be branded, then?



9 When asked to close his eyes, he broke into a cold sweat...



10 When told to open them he fainted in relief – the leader of the group was holding out a banana leaf of barbecued, freshly-caught fish for him to try!



PS. This is the locals' traditional way to catch freshwater fish. The creatures are so dazed and confused by the torch lights that they can simply be lifted out of the water!



FACE ON MARS

Special Investigation File: 54

Subject: Who constructed the shapes and the Face on Mars?

Place: Cydonia region, Mars

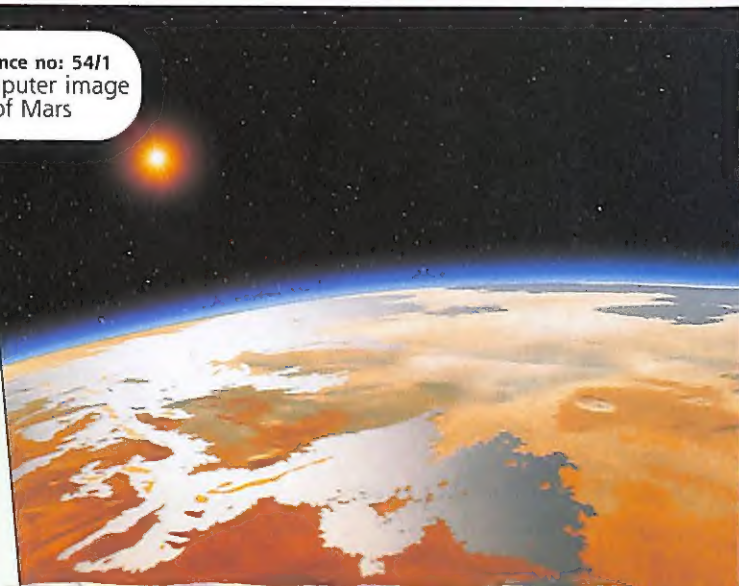
SpineChiller creates a file

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1976, American space agency NASA sent an unmanned spacecraft on a mission to Mars. The Viking 1 orbiting probe transmitted thousands of pictures back to Earth. One of them, in particular, has been the subject of serious scrutiny ever since: the Face on Mars. This so-called face stares into space from the surface. It has eyes, a nose, a mouth, and is a staggering 1.5km in length! Almost as amazing is a picture capturing a cluster of pyramid-shaped structures that stick out in a square.

NASA dismissed the pictures as tricks of the light and said that the Face and shapes were nothing more than natural rocks. Others believe that the structures were put there by the Martians.

Evidence no: 54/1
A computer image of Mars



April 1998

Dear Mr Marsden

Have you heard that NASA has just released new pictures of the Face on Mars on to the Internet? The Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft (MGS) beamed them down today from the Cydonia region of Mars.

I've attached a selection below for you to have a look and tell me what you think? I don't think the Face is as clear as the 1976 image, despite being enhanced by state-of-the-art camera equipment.

I'm very upset because I've waited 22 years for NASA to publish new pictures. Vital evidence is being withdrawn, I am certain. There was intelligent life on this planet, and the Martians made the Face and shapes to prove it. We are not alone...

Mr Grey

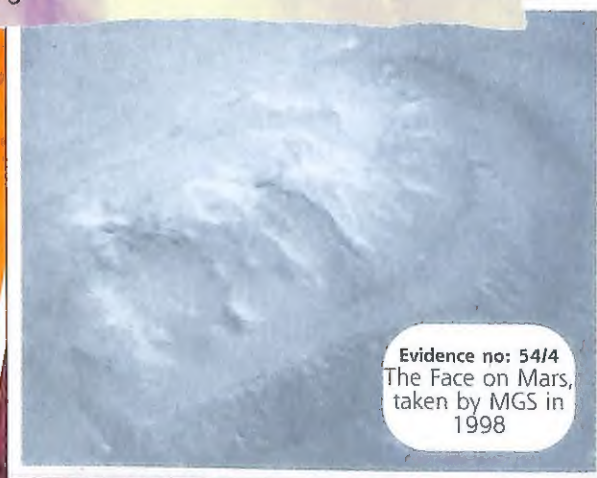
Evidence no: 54/2
The pyramid structures, taken by MGS in 1998



Evidence no: 54/3
The Face on Mars, taken in 1976



Evidence no: 54/4
The Face on Mars, taken by MGS in 1998



Monday June 1 1998. News just in ... Martian-hunters think they've spotted other signs of life on Mars. What looks like eight buildings surrounded by a wall have shown up on an image of the south polar ice-cap. Critics call it camera trickery but some believe it could have been an industrial site for the Martians billions of years ago. NASA plans to send an orbiting probe to the area in 1999.

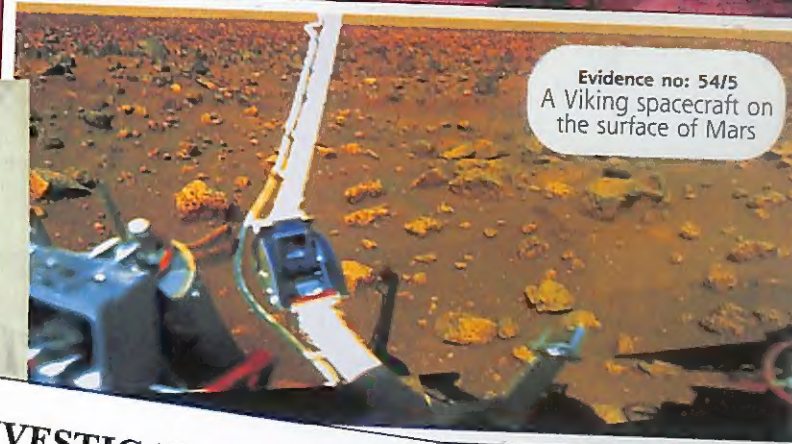
Evidence no: 54/6
The launch of Mars Global Surveyor



CONCLUSION

The 1998 satellite pictures convinced some experts that the Face and shapes are natural rocks after all. Others, however, are now even more certain that the structures are Martian-made and that an intelligence – far superior to our own – did exist on Mars. Space agencies have planned more missions in the millennium so we Earthlings can find out exactly who was – or still is – out there!

Evidence no: 54/5
A Viking spacecraft on the surface of Mars



INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

The Face and shapes could have been built by the Martians because:

- evidence suggests that, billions of years ago, Mars was warm and wet enough for life forms to develop
- the Face and shapes have shown up on images from all angles, so cannot be dismissed as tricks of the light
- the image of the Face reveals features that cannot have been put there by nature: head, nose, matching eyes with pupils, and a mouth with teeth!
- billions of years of erosion accounts for the Face not being that defined
- in 1976, the pyramids looked like they were arranged in a perfect square, and would seem beyond random chance
- the Sphinx and the pyramids of Egypt are so similar to the Face and shapes that they could have been built by the same people!

INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

The Face and shapes may just be rocks because:

- there was not enough water on Mars for a civilisation to live long enough to build the Face and shapes
- if no one had made out a so-called 'face' in the 1976 frame, they would not have even noticed one in the 1998 picture
- according to some, the 1998 images reveal that the pyramids are not in a perfect square after all
- the 1998 Face has been enhanced and cleaned up, yet it still looks vague
- imaginations have run wild. The Face and shapes are similar to all the other natural craters, lumps and rocks on Mars. It is just a fluke that they have formed to look like images on Earth.

Unexplained

CLASSIC



SERIAL

Chapter 3

Dracula

Retold from a story by Bram Stoker

After seeing the evil Count Dracula in London, Jonathan handed Mina the diary that he had written during his time in Castle Dracula. Mina was shocked by what she read. She could not bear to think that such a fiend as Count Dracula had nearly destroyed her young husband. When Mina and Jonathan arrived home, there was even worse news. Dr Seward had arrived and announced that, despite his best efforts and the good work of a medical specialist, Lucy was dead.

Jonathan shared in Mina's grief and did his best to console her. But he could not stop his waking and sleeping nightmares, in which Count Dracula was alive and free, roaming the streets of London.

The grief-stricken couple welcomed a visit from the specialist who had tried to save Lucy. He was an energetic old man from Amsterdam called Professor Van Helsing, and Jonathan and Mina both warmed to him. He questioned Mina gently about Lucy's habit of sleep-walking outside the house. Finally, after he had learned a little about Jonathan's ordeal, Professor Van Helsing asked to read his diary.

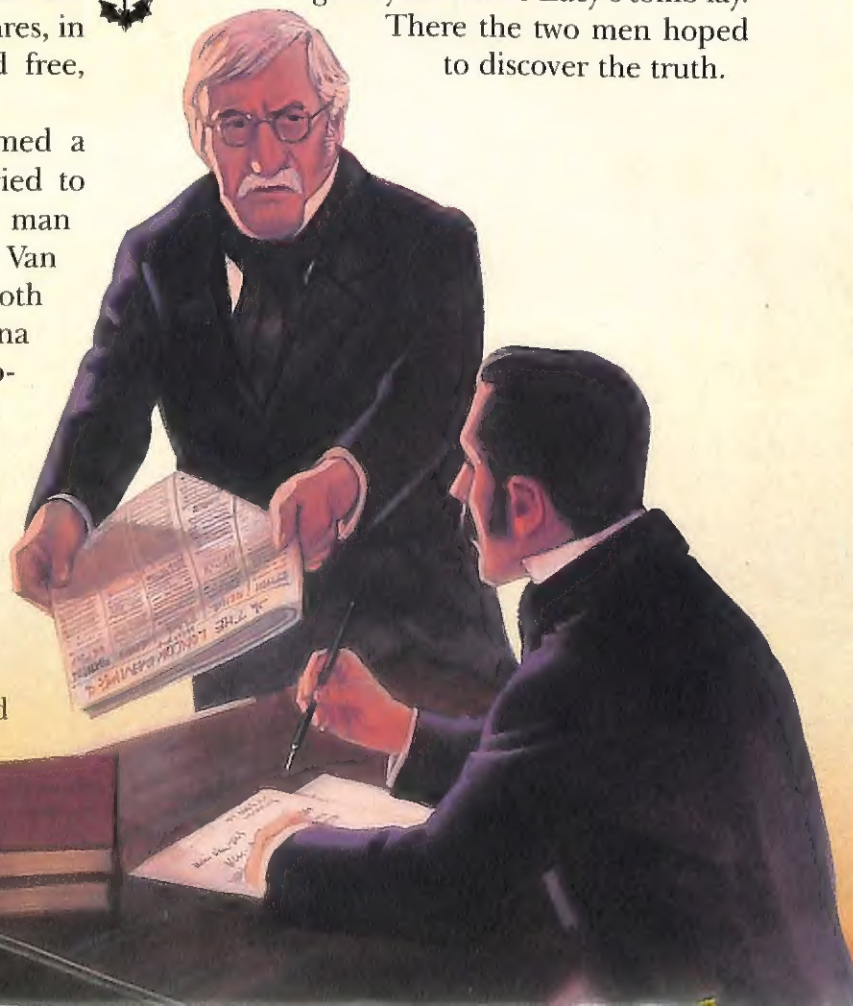
Several weeks later, the professor burst into Dr Seward's office and thrust a newspaper under

his nose. One story was circled in red pen. It concerned a series of attacks on children in Hampstead, North London. The victims all had small wounds on their throats.

"It sounds just like what happened to poor Lucy," Dr Seward muttered.

"It is worse than that, I fear," said the professor gravely. "Please don't think me mad when I tell you that those marks were probably made by Lucy."

Dr Seward could hardly believe what Van Helsing had said to him. But he agreed to accompany the professor that night to the graveyard where Lucy's tomb lay. There the two men hoped to discover the truth.



Van Helsing and Seward conducted a long and patient vigil near Lucy's tomb until an hour before sunrise.

"My dear Professor, what are we waiting for... a ghost?" asked Dr Seward.

"Something similar," replied the professor. "I suspect our wait will be over shortly and then you will see."

The professor was correct. Not ten minutes later, a figure appeared in the graveyard, moving stealthily between the headstones and tombs. As it came closer to them, Dr Seward gulped.

"It is poor Lucy. But how her features have changed!"

Lucy's lips were crimson with blood, and her hair, wild and unkempt, flowed out like a cloak behind her. Both men crouched lower so as not to be seen. They watched in amazement as Lucy passed through a crack in the side of her tomb.

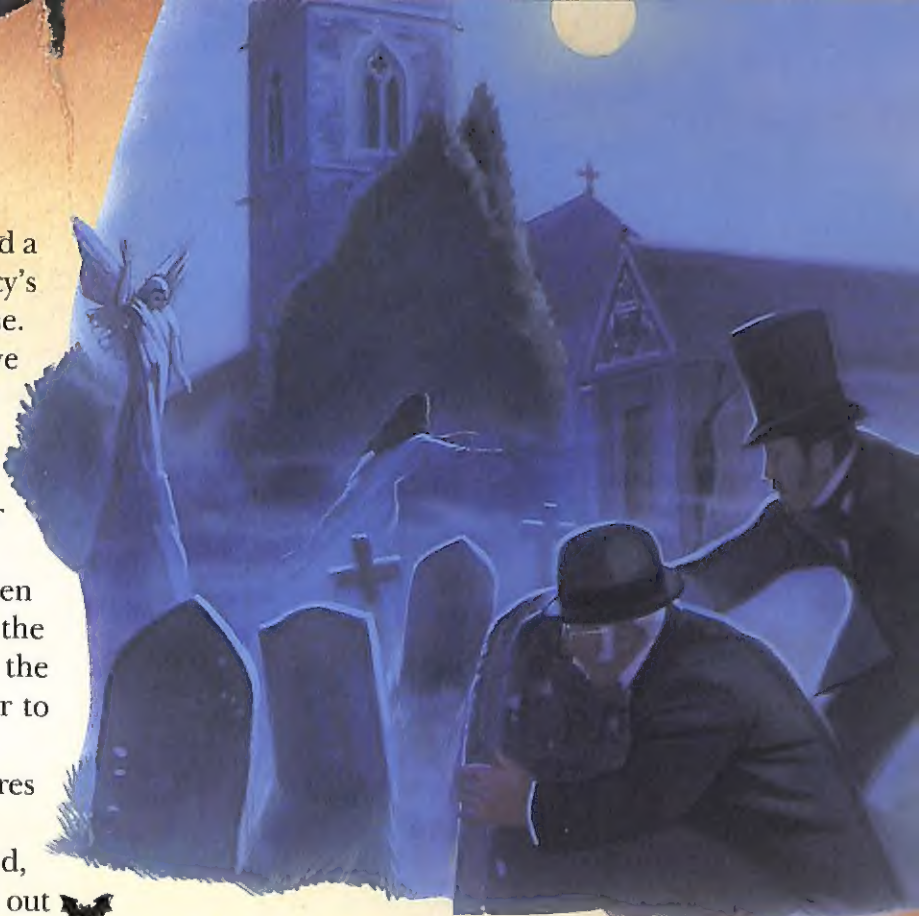
"I know it is deeply wrong to enter a sealed crypt, but we must. It is a matter of the very greatest importance," whispered Professor Van Helsing. Dumb with horror, Dr Seward silently nodded his agreement.

The pair waited a short while before unlocking the tomb door and venturing inside. The air was thick with a foul-smelling odour and Dr Seward shivered.

"Keep your courage, Doctor," advised the professor, slowly opening Lucy's coffin. There she lay, her face contorted into a hideous snarl. Blood was dripping from the two fangs sticking out over her lips. Some had already stained her clothes.

"Now do you believe me?" asked the professor. "Lucy is a vampire, one of the undead. With those teeth she will quench her thirst for blood and will kill and kill again. You must drive a stake through her heart in the name of God. If you don't, she will never be at peace."

Dr Seward took several deep breaths and tried to control his trembling hands.



Meanwhile, the professor took a mallet and a wooden stake from his knapsack and explained exactly what to do. It took an age before the doctor was able to summon up enough courage. Then suddenly, wordlessly, he took a huge swing with the mallet. It came crashing down on the stake, which drove into Lucy's chest and on through her heart. She writhed and the most terrifying scream issued from her blood-stained lips. Then she gnashed her sharp teeth violently. Finally, all was quiet once more.

The two medical men stared at Lucy's motionless body. The change that had swept over her was dramatic. Her face was still pale, but now it looked peaceful and at rest. Professor Van Helsing closed her coffin and re-sealed her tomb. Then both he and Dr Seward walked out of the graveyard in complete silence.

Two days later, Professor Van Helsing and Dr Seward joined Jonathan and Mina at their home in London for a most serious meeting.

"Gentlemen and lady," said Van Helsing,

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER.

nodding towards Mina, "we have a duty to hunt down the monster who murdered Lucy and trapped Jonathan. We must share all that we know about vampires and together plot a way to defeat him."

Everyone agreed and vowed solemnly to do what they could. The meeting continued into the evening as the group talked. They discussed how vampires lived by feeding on human blood and how their powers only lasted from sunset to sunrise. Jonathan reminisced about how the inhabitants of Transylvania had made the sign of the cross whenever Count Dracula was mentioned. They had also given him a crucifix and garlic. Professor Van Helsing explained that these signs and objects warded off evil spirits, including vampires.

Jonathan then told them all some very important news. Despite the shipwreck, the 50 coffins from Castle Dracula had arrived at Carfax, the Count's new English home.



"And I have discovered an even more chilling fact," added the professor. "I do not know exactly where, but I believe that Count Dracula has bought another house in the centre of London."

Mina and Jonathan both shivered. It was terrifying to think that the Count might be living so close to their own London home. Jonathan gazed out of the window.

"My god, there's a bat," he cried. But then he realised that it was no more than a blackbird swooping past the window.

"I'm sorry, my nerves are so on edge," he explained.

"That's all right, my dear Mr Harker," soothed the professor kindly. "It's perfectly understandable. This is a very trying time." He then paused a while before continuing: "We know that Count Dracula's powers are strong during the hours of darkness and that he has the ability to turn into a bat or a wolf. So it is vital that we strike during the day when he is at rest. But first, the coffins at Carfax must be made safe."

Jonathan agreed to accompany Dr Seward and Professor Van Helsing to Carfax to carry out the necessary work. But despite her protests, the men refused to let Mina join them on their mission.

The three vampire-hunters arrived at Carfax late one night. Jonathan had often visited the house before his Transylvania trip, but now it truly disturbed him for the first time. He tried to keep his nerve as he led the others to the chapel.

Professor Van Helsing insisted on entering first, his hands held high in the shape of a cross. The other two followed slowly and nervously. The stench of death was overwhelming. Even Van Helsing and Dr Seward, hardened medical men, had to cover their noses and mouths with their handkerchiefs.

WORD POWER

vigil – a long watch, especially overnight

unkempt – uncombed; tangled

crypt – an underground burial chamber

contorted – twisted out of its normal or usual shape

reminisced about – remembered and talked about

warded off – drove away; repelled

holy wafers – circles of flat bread used in Holy Communion services

sterilise – remove germs from to make spotlessly clean (sterile)

Inside, the three men counted the wooden coffins – there were just 29 of them. Then Professor Van Helsing reached into his knapsack and handed the others some holy wafers.

"With these sacred wafers," he explained in a whisper, "we can sterilise the earth in all the coffins. Once we have done this, these evil boxes can never be used as a place of rest for vampires."

The friends had started to place holy wafers in the soil when something made them look up. The room seemed to have grown lighter. The change was not caused by the approach of dawn or a lit candle, but by the red glow of hundreds of pairs of eyes. Legions of evil-looking rats were staring at them from all directions. The three brave men hurriedly finished their task and bolted out of the chapel.

"We still have much work to do – 21 of the 50 coffins have yet to be found," noted Dr Seward on their journey home.

"Yes, we will investigate tomorrow," Professor Van Helsing assured him.

But Jonathan Harker remained totally silent. He looked very unwell. The scene in the Carfax chapel and the terrible smell had brought back bad memories of his imprisonment in Castle Dracula, memories that he preferred to forget.

The three men returned in haste to the Harkers' home in London and Jonathan went straight up to bed. Mina was already asleep. How pale and scared she looked, Jonathan thought, as he pulled up the bedcovers and snuggled down beside her. When he blew out the lantern on the bedside table, he did not notice the tell-tale pinpricks on poor Mina's neck. Streams of blood were trickling down from the holes and slowly beginning to dry.





FORTUNE-TELLING

Are you fascinated by the future? Sometimes we are simply curious to know what our life will be like in a year or five years' time. Or sometimes we may have a difficult decision to make and long to know what the consequences will be. There are certain people who claim they can see what is going to happen in the future. These people are called fortune-tellers.

Fortune-telling traditions go back thousands of years and come from all over the world. Here are just a few of them.

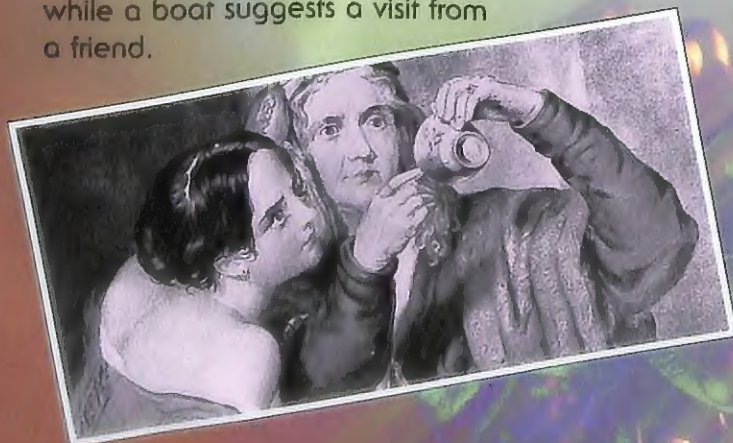


▲ CRYSTAL CLEAR?

Do some people really have the power to see into the future? This is the crystal ball, a common fortune-telling device.

▼ LUCKY LEAVES?

A woman waits to see what fortune lies in the bottom of the tea cup.



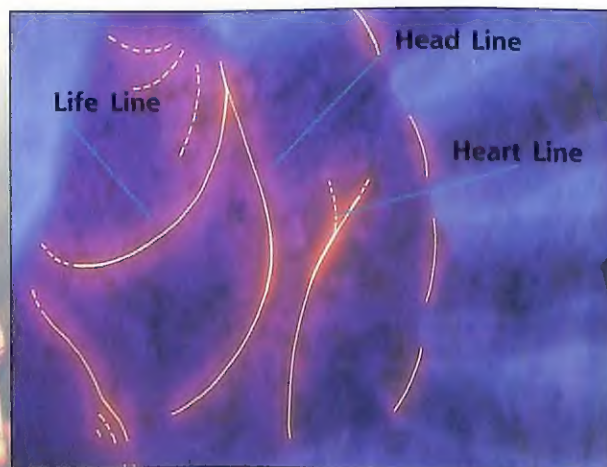
READING PALMS

Examining the lines on the palm as a way of understanding people's personality and predicting their future was popular in Ancient Greece and India. Both traditions are still common across the world today. Here is a list of what fortune-tellers claim the lines show.

Life line: if you have a long line, it suggests you are lively and if you have a short line it suggests you are laid-back. If it is strongly curved, it could mean travel to far places.

Head line: this indicates your intelligence. A long and deep line means you are bright and creative!

Heart line: this reveals a person's romantic life. The more branches you have on this line, the more romantic encounters you will have!



▲ READING YOUR PALM

Here's what the lines mean. Now find out about your personality and future by reading your own palm.

Marriage and children lines: these are small lines on the side of the hand indicating a person's longer-lasting relationships. The length of the line is related to the length of the relationship, and the unbroken lines mean that the relationship will be lucky. The number of short vertical lines rising from these lines is supposed to show how many children you will have.

Fate line: some people hardly have a fate line. The more obvious the line is, the more ambitious the person, supposedly. If the line stretches to your middle finger, you could be destined for fame and fortune!

Sun line: this line is next to the fate line and runs up the palm. It indicates happiness starting from when you meet the right person.



▲ RUNESTONES

An ancient runestone from Sweden. The letters of the rune alphabet have been carved on to the stone. The letters (top left) mean different things.

REACH FOR THE RUNE

Runes are the letters of an ancient Nordic alphabet. The number of letters in the rune alphabet varies but, today, most fortune-tellers base their predictions on 24 runes. The history of fortune-telling with runes is shrouded in mystery, but it is generally thought that each letter has a special significance, and the reading is based on which symbol you turn over. The letters can be written on cards and then dealt in a pack or carved into stones (as above). The letters might warn you to take action, be patient or be grateful for what you've got!



▲ TAROT TEASERS

The moon (left) and death (right) cards are dealt in the tarot card pack. But these cards might not mean what you think.

TAROT CARDS

Tarot cards are what today's playing cards were first based on. The first mention of cards in Europe was during the 1300s, when they were used for playing games and fortune-telling.

Each tarot card has a figure or scene which has a meaning. The tarot reader will set out the cards in a special way, then each card can be read. If the card is placed upright it has one meaning, if it is placed upside down it has a different, usually opposite, meaning.

Probably the most famous tarot card is the 'death' card. However, it doesn't mean what you might expect. It is more likely to mean such things as change, loss, failure or the end of a relationship. Another well-known card is the 'moon' card. If you get this, watch out because someone could be trying to trick you.

▼ THAT'S HOW THE COOKIE CRUMBLES!

Your destiny could be wrapped inside a fortune cookie. These tasty sweets always contain a message inside. Unravel one and it might mean luck is heading your way.



Vicious Vikings Puzzles

FATAL FACTS

Vikings believed that the glory of going to Valhalla awaited all those killed in battle and that, after death, women warriors called Valkyries would escort them there. It was thought that ships ferried the dead to their spiritual life!

LOST LANDS

The Vikings set sail on ruthless raids from their homelands in the 8th century. Find out what these countries are called today by unscrambling the letters carved on the longship.

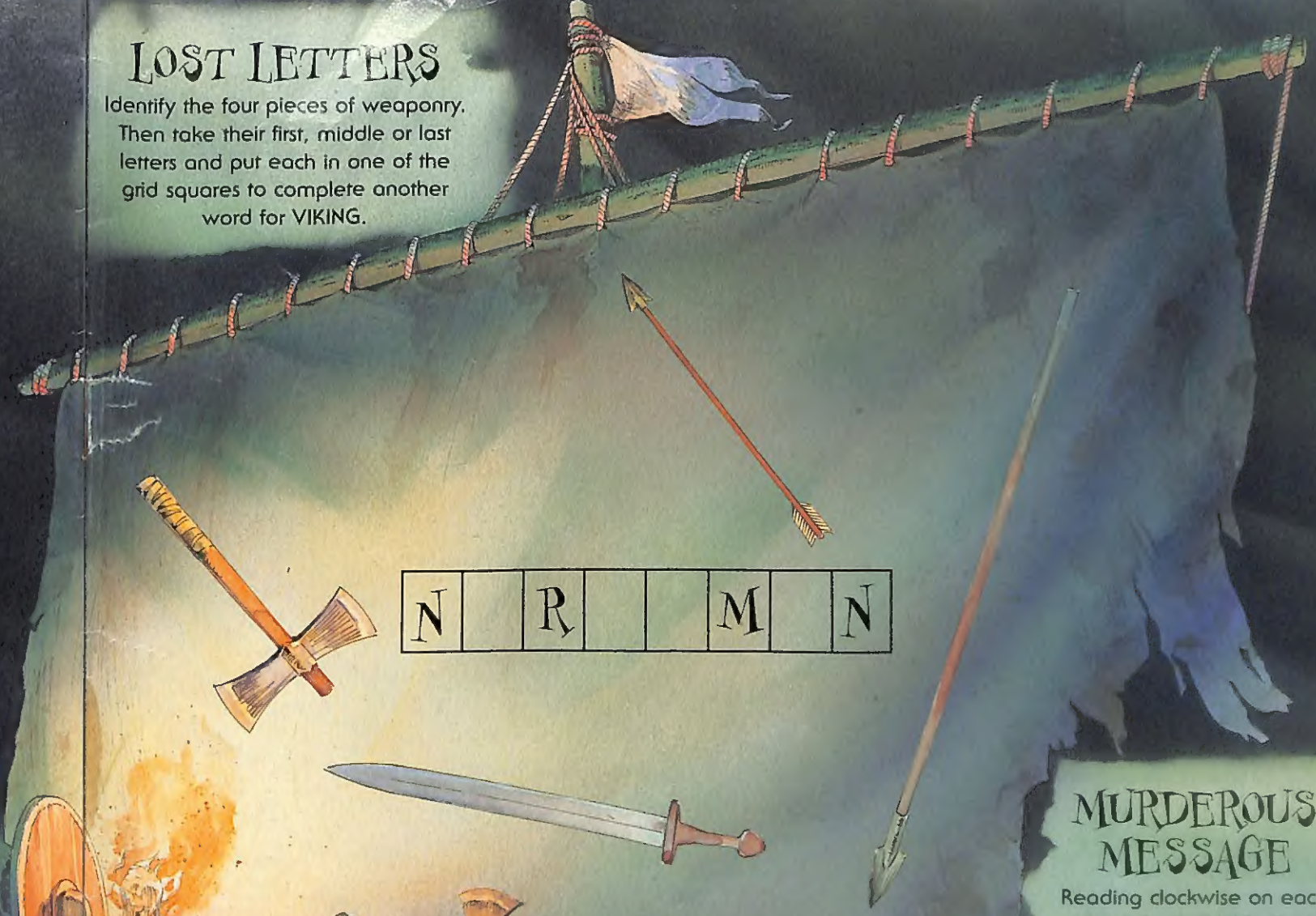
MONSTER MATCH!

Only one of these shadow shapes perfectly matches the carved dragon-head on the Viking longship. Which is it?



LOST LETTERS

Identify the four pieces of weaponry. Then take their first, middle or last letters and put each in one of the grid squares to complete another word for VIKING.



N		R		M		N
---	--	---	--	---	--	---

MURDEROUS MESSAGE

Reading clockwise on each of the three shields, from left to right, work out a spinechilling warning!



FREAKY FACTS

From both ends of Britain come stories of ghostly Viking activity. A solitary, supernatural Viking has been said to walk the mud flats of Canvey Island in Essex. And the Scottish Isle of Iona lays claim to sightings of supernatural longships and their phantom crews!

FEROCIOUS FACTS

Some Viking warriors, known as berserkers, worked themselves into a wild frenzy and chose not to wear armour as they raced into battle, with terrifying howls, intent on slaying as many of the enemy as possible!

FLOATING FACES!

The scary Viking raiders are only too easily seen! But there are other Viking faces hidden on this page. How many can you see?

USE - OR LOSE - YOUR HEAD!

You're cornered by a vicious Viking. To survive, you must disarm him. The five questions correspond to parts of the warrior's sword. Answer each by ticking the TRUE or FALSE box. Get all five right and he loses his sword completely. Get three or more right and his sword will shatter into pieces. Get less than two right and run for your life!

1. Viking helmets had horns.
2. Vikings gave their weapons names, such as 'Leg Biter'.
3. Thor was the Viking god of thunder and storms.
4. The Vikings never used horses in battle.
5. The Viking alphabet letters were called runes.

TRUE	FALSE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANSWERS

LOST LETTERS: HORSKMAN (SWORD, SPEAR, AXE AND ARROW).
 MURDEROUS MESSAGE: (Shield 1) WE ARE ARMED AND
 READY TO SLAY ANYONE (Shield 2) WHO DOES NOT RUN.
 MONSTER MATCH: shadow shape 3.
 FLOATING FACES: there are 6 hidden faces. See below.
 USE - OR LOSE - YOUR HEAD! 1. False, 2. True,
 3. True, 4. False, 5. True.

